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Tetranins: new putative spider mite elicitors of host plant defense

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Manuscripts

1 **Tetranins: new putative spider mite elicitors of host plant defense**

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3 Junya Iida^{1*}, Yoshitake Desaki^{1*}, Kumiko Hata¹, Takuya Uemura¹, Ayano Yasuno¹,
4 Monirul Islam², Massimo E. Maffei², Rika Ozawa³, Tadaaki Nakajima¹, Ivan Galis⁴, Gen-
5 ichiro Arimura¹

6

7 ¹Department of Biological Science & Technology, Faculty of Industrial Science &
8 Technology, Tokyo University of Science, Tokyo 125-8585, Japan

9 ²Department of Life Sciences and Systems Biology, Plant Physiology-Innovation
10 Centre, University of Turin, Via Quarello15/A, I-10135 Turin, Italy

11 ³Center for Ecological Research, Kyoto University, Otsu 520-2113, Japan

12 ⁴Institute of Plant Science and Resources (IPSR), Okayama University, 2-20-1 Chuo,
13 Kurashiki 710-0046, Japan

14

15 Corresponding Author:

16 Gen-ichiro Arimura

17 Department of Biological Science & Technology, Faculty of Industrial Science &
18 Technology, Tokyo University of Science, 6-3-1 Nijuku, Katsushika-ku, Tokyo 125-
19 8585, Japan

20 Tel: 81 3 5876 1467

21 Fax: 81 3 5876 1639

22

23 *These authors contributed equally to the article.

24 Summary

- 25 • The two-spotted spider mite (*Tetranychus urticae*) is a plant-sucking arthropod
26 herbivore that feeds on a wide array of cultivated plants. In contrast to the well-
27 characterized classical chewing herbivore salivary elicitors that promote plant
28 defense responses, little is known about sucking herbivores' elicitors. To
29 characterize the sucking herbivore elicitors, we explored putative salivary gland
30 proteins of spider mites by using an *Agrobacterium*-mediated transient expression
31 system or protein infiltration in damaged bean leaves.
- 32 • Two candidate elicitors (designated as tetranin1 [Tet1] and tetranin2 [Tet2])
33 triggered early leaf responses (cytosolic calcium influx and membrane
34 depolarization) and increased the transcript levels of defense genes in the leaves,
35 eventually resulting in reduced survivability of *Tetranychus urticae* on the host
36 leaves as well as induction of indirect plant defenses by attracting predatory mites.
37 Tet1 and/or Tet2 also induced jasmonate, salicylate and abscisic acid biosynthesis.
- 38 • Notably, Tet2-induced signaling cascades were also activated via the generation
39 of reactive oxygen species.

- 40 • The signaling cascades of these two structurally dissimilar elicitors are mostly
41 overlapping but partially distinct and thus they would coordinate the direct and
42 indirect defense responses in host plants under spider mite attack in both shared
43 and distinct manners.

44

45 **Key words:** defense response, elicitor, *Phaseolus vulgaris*, tetranin (Tet), two-spotted
46 spider mite (*Tetranychus urticae*).

47

For Peer Review

48 **Introduction**

49 Herbivore oral secretions (OS) contain a suite of “elicitors” that induce plant defense
50 responses (Maffei *et al.*, 2012). For instance, a group of hydroxy fatty acid-amino acid
51 conjugates (FACs), including volicitin [*N*-(17-hydroxylinolenoyl)-L-glutamine] (Alborn
52 *et al.*, 1997), have been intensively characterized as elicitors from several lepidopteran
53 larvae, crickets and fruit fly larvae (Spiteller & Boland, 2003; Yoshinaga *et al.*, 2007;
54 Mori & Yoshinaga, 2011). When volicitin is applied to mechanically damaged sites of
55 leaves of maize seedlings, the seedlings start to emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
56 that attract parasitic wasps, natural enemies of maize herbivores (Alborn *et al.*, 1997).
57 FAC-type elicitors such as volicitin induce depolarization of the plant cell plasma
58 membrane potential (V_m), which corresponds to the opening of voltage-dependent Ca^{2+}
59 channels, to initiate cellular defense responses (Maffei *et al.*, 2007). Depolarization of
60 V_m in *Arabidopsis thaliana* leaves has also been shown to be triggered by a porin-like
61 protein from oral secretions of *Spodoptera littoralis* (Guo *et al.*, 2013).
62 Other distinct types of OS-derived elicitors have been reported, such as disulfoxy fatty
63 acids (caeliferins) from the American bird grasshopper (*Schistocerca americana*) (Alborn

64 *et al.*, 2007), β -glucosidase from the cabbage white butterfly (*Pieris brassicae*) (Mattiacci
65 *et al.*, 1995), the peptide inceptin from the fall armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*)
66 (Schmelz *et al.*, 2006), and a putative β -galactofuranose polysaccharide from the
67 Egyptian cotton leafworm (*Spodoptera littoralis*) (Bricchi *et al.*, 2012). However, all of
68 these elicitors were obtained from chewing herbivores, and very few elicitors have been
69 characterized from sucking types of herbivores. Until now, a mucin-like salivary protein
70 (NIMLP) of the piercing-sucking insect *Nilaparvata lugens* (Huang *et al.*, 2017;
71 Shanguan *et al.*, 2018) is the only elicitor that has been characterized from a sucking
72 herbivore.

73 The two-spotted spider mite (*Tetranychus urticae*, Acari: Tetranychidae) is an
74 agricultural pest of herbaceous and woody plants. In this study, to mine elicitors from
75 spider mites, we focused on their putative salivary proteins/peptides. *In silico* searches of
76 the *T. urticae* genome database (Grbic *et al.*, 2011) and *in planta* analyses using
77 *Phaseolus vulgaris* allowed us to characterize new elicitors, which we named “tetranins,”
78 that play a significant role in eliciting both direct and indirect defense responses of
79 *Phaseolus vulgaris* host plants mediated through an array of intracellular signaling

80 activations.

81

82

83 **Materials and Methods**

84 Plants and mites

85 Kidney bean plants (*P. vulgaris* cv. Nagauzuramame) and eggplant plants (*Solanum*

86 *melongena* cv. Chikuyo) were grown in soil for 2 weeks in climate-controlled rooms at

87 $24 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$ with a photoperiod of 16 h ($80 \mu\text{E m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$).

88 *T. urticae* Koch (Acari: Tetranychidae) were reared on detached *P. vulgaris* leaf discs (25

89 cm^2 each) placed on water-saturated cotton in Petri dishes (90 mm diameter, 14 mm

90 depth) at $24 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$. Small leaf discs (each 1 cm^2), which were inhabited by ~ 20 mites and

91 eggs, were collected from the original discs and transferred to fresh leaf discs every 2

92 weeks for incubation. Adult females (10 days old) after oviposition were used for assays.

93 *Phytoseiulus persimilis*, obtained from Arysta Lifescience Corporation (Tokyo, Japan),

94 were reared on spider mite-infested *P. vulgaris* plants at $24 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$. Fertilized females of

95 both mites 5-10 days after their final molt were used for the experiments.

96

97 *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*-mediated transient expression (agroinfiltration) in *P.*
98 *vulgaris* and *S. melongena* leaves.

99 In order to investigate the candidate salivary gland proteins (SGPs) in functional assays,
100 we relied on variants of SGPs with truncation of the signal peptide (Bos *et al.*, 2010;
101 Villarroel *et al.*, 2016). An open reading frame (ORF) of each SGP cDNA fragment
102 without the signal peptide encoding sequence (Table S1) was amplified with KOD -Plus-
103 Neo DNA polymerase (Toyobo, Osaka, Japan). Each cDNA was cloned into TaKaRa T-
104 Vector pMD20 (Takara Bio, Otsu, Japan) and then inserted into binary vector pMDC32
105 (2x CaMV 35S promoter [35SP]::Gateway (GW) region::*nopaline synthase* terminator
106 [NOST]) using the Gateway cloning system (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham,
107 MA). The resulting plasmid, pMDC32-*SGP*, or pMDC32, was transformed into *A.*
108 *tumefaciens* strain EHA105 by electroporation. The bacteria were first cultured overnight
109 in 5 mL of YEP medium with kanamycin and spectinomycin and were then cultured again
110 in 30 mL of YEP medium with kanamycin and spectinomycin for 2-3 h. Cells were
111 harvested by centrifugation and resuspended in 10 mM MES buffer (pH 5.6) and 10 mM

112 MgCl₂. The bacterial suspensions were adjusted to an OD₆₀₀ of 0.6 and washed twice with
113 MES buffer; then, acetosyringone was added to a final concentration of 150 μM. The
114 suspensions (approximately 500 μl) were infiltrated into one of the primary leaves of the
115 individual *P. vulgaris* and *S. melongena* plants using a needleless syringe, yielding an
116 infiltrated area of approximately 3 cm². A total of 5 independent areas were infiltrated in
117 each primary leaf, and 5 *P. vulgaris* and 6 *S. melongena* plants were assessed, eventually
118 yielding 25 and 30 infiltrated areas, respectively. One day after bacterial infiltration, a
119 piece of leaf disc (1.8 cm²) was prepared from each single infiltrated area, and the
120 resulting total of 25 *P. vulgaris* and 30 *S. melongena* discs were used for the biological
121 assays described below.

122 Note that there were no differences in the survival of *A. tumefaciens* carrying plasmids
123 for vector control or salivary gland protein in host leaves 2 days after infiltration (Fig.
124 S1).

125

126 Recombinant tetranin protein preparation

127 The ORF of a truncated variant of each tetranin cDNA lacking the signal peptide (Table

128 S1) or green fluorescent protein (GFP) was subcloned into the pCold™ GST expression
129 vector (Takara Bio). The recombinant vectors (pCold GST-*Tet1* and pCold GST-*Tet2*)
130 were transformed into *Escherichia coli* BL21-CodonPlus(DE3) to prepare the
131 recombinant tetranin1 (Tet1) and tetranin2 (Tet2) proteins. The resulting bacterial strain
132 was grown to A_{600} of 0.8 at 37°C in 2 l of LB medium with ampicillin at 100 $\mu\text{g mL}^{-1}$.
133 Cultures were induced with 1 mM isopropyl 1-thio- β -D-galactopyranoside and kept
134 overnight at 15°C. Cells were pelleted by centrifugation and resuspended in 50 mL of
135 phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) buffer (pH 7.3). Resuspended cells were lysed by
136 sonication. Cell extracts were clarified by centrifugation, and the soluble proteins in the
137 supernatant were purified using Glutathione Sepharose 4B (GE Healthcare Japan, Tokyo)
138 following the manufacturer's protocol. The glutathione-S-transferase (GST) tag was
139 removed using HRV 3C Protease (Takara, Otsu, Japan). The buffer was finally replaced
140 with 20 mM HEPES buffer (pH 7.0) via dialysis using cellulose tubing, 8/32 (Eidia
141 Corporation, Tokyo, Japan) three times: first for 3 h, next overnight, and finally for 3 h.
142
143 Protein infiltration

144 Tetranin or GFP proteins (3 μ M) dissolved in 500 μ l of HEPES buffer were infiltrated
145 into one of the primary leaves of *P. vulgaris* plants with a needleless syringe, yielding
146 approximately 3 cm² of infiltrated area per leaf. One day after infiltration, a disc (1.8 cm²)
147 of the infiltrated area was prepared from each individual leaf for use in the spider mite
148 mortality assays (see below). In addition, a fragment of the infiltrated area (approximately
149 100 mg fresh weight) was harvested for RNA extraction from the leaves at the respective
150 time after infiltration.

151

152 Mechanical damage (MD) and protein application

153 MD was performed with stainless steel needles on the primary leaves of potted plants
154 (with 2-mm intervals between the MD spots). Approximately 20 MD spots were applied
155 onto one of the primary leaves of an individual plant for transcript/hormone analyses.
156 Otherwise, approximately 100 MD spots were applied onto the two primary leaves of an
157 individual plant for volatile/olfactometer analyses (50 MD spots/leaf). Tetranin or GFP
158 proteins (0.1-3.0 μ M) dissolved in HEPES buffer were applied onto the MD spots
159 (approximately 1 μ L per spot) immediately after MD.

160

161 Spider mite mortality assays

162 Ten adult female spider mites were transferred from a master *P. vulgaris* leaf disc (25163 cm² each, see above) on which approximately 800 mites had been incubated for 10 days,164 onto a *P. vulgaris* leaf disc (1.8 cm²) that had been infiltrated with *Agrobacterium* or

165 protein solution (see above) on wet cotton in a plastic Petri dish (90 mm diameter). Each

166 dish contained 10 discs. The mortality of mites on the discs was determined 2 days after

167 agroinfiltration or 3 days after protein infiltration. Individual mites were scored as “dead”

168 when they did not respond to brushing. Data are shown after normalization by the

169 mortality of mites from control treatment performed on the same day, in order to

170 normalize for the variability of control data obtained on different assay days.

171

172 *In situ* hybridization173 Adult females of *T. urticae* were fixed in 1:1 hexane and PBS with 0.1% (v/v) Tween 20

174 (PBST) containing 4% (w/v) paraformaldehyde at 4°C for 30 min. After washing in 1:1

175 methanol and PBST, the mites were sonicated in a cleansing bath of 5 mg ml⁻¹ protease

176 K for 6 min, followed by post-fixation with 4% (w/v) paraformaldehyde in PBST for 30
177 min. After washing with PBST, the mites were prehybridized in hybridization buffer
178 (50% (v/v) formamide, 4x SSC, 1x Denhardt's solution, 250 µg/mL yeast tRNA (Sigma-
179 Aldrich, St. Louis, MO), 50 µg mL⁻¹ heparin, 5% (w/v) dextran sulfate and 0.1% Tween
180 20) at 52°C overnight.

181 For synthesis of the RNA fragments encoding the ORFs of tetranins, pMD20 vectors into
182 which the cDNA fragments isolated as described above were inserted were digested with
183 either BamH1 or KpnI, and the probes were then synthesized from the linearized plasmids
184 using SP6 RNA polymerase (Roche Applied Science, Indianapolis, IN) and DIG RNA
185 labeling mix (Roche Applied Science).

186 The prehybridized mites were hybridized in the hybridization buffer (200 µL) with the
187 probe (2 µL) at 52°C for 48 h. The mites were washed in 2x SSC buffer containing 50%
188 formamide and 0.1% (v/v) Tween 20 6 times at 48°C for 25 min and then washed in
189 PBST containing 0.1% (w/v) bovine serum albumin (BSA) 3 times for 15 min. The mites
190 were incubated with anti-DIG-AP, Fab fragments (Roche Applied Science) diluted
191 1:1000 in PBSTB at 4°C overnight. After washing with Tris-buffered saline (TBS, pH

192 7.5) and TBS (pH 9.5), the hybridization signal was visualized with 1 mg mL⁻¹ Fast Red
193 (Sigma-Aldrich) and 5% (w/v) aluminum sulfate in TBS (pH 9.5) at 4°C in the dark for
194 30-60 min. Methanol was used to stop the reaction and eliminate the background signal,
195 and the mites were then treated with 70% glycerol in PBST. After washing with PBST,
196 the mites were mounted on glass slides and observed with a fluorescence microscope
197 IX71 (Olympus, Tokyo, Japan).

198

199 Protein preparation and Western blot analysis

200 Total proteins were extracted from whole bodies of *T. urticae* adult females (300 mites
201 for Tet1 and 20 mites for Tet2) in Laemmli sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS) sample buffer
202 (20 µL). Otherwise, proteins were extracted with Laemmli SDS sample buffer (200 µL)
203 from a *P. vulgaris* leaf disc (3 x 3 cm) which had been cut out from a whole leaf that had
204 been exposed to a wet mesh with or without 100 *T. urticae* for 7 days, and from which all
205 the mites and eggs had then been removed, as well as leaves that were evenly sprayed
206 with 1 mL of aqueous solution (0.5% (v/v) ethanol) of methyl jasmonate (MeJA, Wako
207 Pure Chemical Industrials, Ltd., Osaka, Japan; 0.1 mM) and/or methyl salicylate (MeSA,
208 Wako; 0.1 mM) or aqueous solution (0.5% (v/v) ethanol), serving as control treatment,
209 for 24 h. Five microliters each of these extracted protein solutions were resolved on a
210 12% SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (PAGE) gel and transferred onto a PVDF

211 membrane (ATTO, Tokyo, Japan). Anti-Tet1 and anti-Tet2 antibodies obtained by
212 immunizing rabbits with the respective peptide antigens (GNDAMIMPTTEDE and
213 ESQKELVEFLGTGGKKVADE; Cosmo Bio, Tokyo Japan) were used as the primary
214 antibodies. Unlabeled anti-rabbit IgG (#3678, Cell Signaling Technology, Danvers, MA)
215 and HRP-linked anti-mouse IgG (#7076) antibodies were used as the secondary and
216 tertiary antibodies. The membranes were soaked with SuperSignal West Femto
217 Maximum Sensitivity Substrate (Thermo Fisher Scientific, Waltham, MA, USA), and
218 the signals were detected with an ImageQuant LAS-4000 imaging system (GE Healthcare,
219 Buckinghamshire, UK).

220

221 RNA extraction, cDNA synthesis and quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR)
222 Approximately 100 mg of leaf tissues were homogenized in liquid nitrogen, and the total
223 RNA was isolated and purified using Sepasol[®]-RNA I Super G (Nacalai Tesque, Kyoto,
224 Japan) following the manufacturer's protocol. Single-stranded cDNA was synthesized
225 using ReverTra Ace qPCR RT Master Mix with gDNA Remover (Toyobo), and 0.5 µg
226 of the total RNA was incubated, first at 37°C for 5 min for the DNase reaction and then
227 at 37°C for 15 min for the RT reaction. Real-time PCR was performed using a CFX
228 Connect real-time PCR detection system (Bio-Rad, Hercules, CA) with THUNDERBIRD
229 SYBR qPCR Mix (Toyobo) and gene-specific primers (Table S2). The following protocol

230 was used: an initial polymerase activation of 60 s at 95°C, followed by 45 cycles of 15 s
231 at 95°C and then 30 s at 60°C. Then, a melting curve analysis preset by the instrument
232 was performed. Relative transcript abundances were determined after normalization of
233 the raw signals with the housekeeping transcript abundance of an actin gene (KF569608).

234

235 Membrane potentials

236 V_m was determined according to the method described previously (Bricchi *et al.*, 2010).

237

238 Determination of intracellular calcium variations

239 Calcium Orange dye (stock solution in DMSO, Molecular Probes, Leiden, The
240 Netherlands) was diluted in HEPES buffer to a final concentration of 5 μM . This solution
241 was applied onto *P. vulgaris* leaves attached to the plant as previously reported (Maffei
242 *et al.*, 2004). After a *P. vulgaris* leaf was gently fixed on a slide glass, a drop of 5 μM
243 Calcium Orange solution (approximately 45 μL) was applied and then covered with
244 another slide glass. After 1 h incubation with Calcium Orange, the leaf was mounted on
245 a Leica TCS SP2 (Leica Microsystems Srl, Milan, Italy) multiband confocal laser

246 scanning microscope (CLSM) stage without separating the leaf from the plant to assess
247 the basic fluorescence levels as a control. Then, 5 μL of either 3 μM Tet1 or 3 μM Tet2
248 protein dissolved in 20 mM HEPES buffer (pH 7.0) was applied onto the *P. vulgaris* leaf,
249 and the calcium signature was observed after 30 min according to the method described
250 previously (Mithöfer *et al.*, 2009).

251

252 ROS measurements

253 Leaf discs (0.785 cm^2) prepared from fresh leaves were incubated overnight in distilled
254 water in a 96-well titer plate (one disc per well). The distilled water was replaced with a
255 luminol-based assay system in 50 μL of solution containing 0.2 μM luminol (Wako Pure
256 Chemical Industrials, Ltd., Osaka, Japan) and 20 $\mu\text{g L}^{-1}$ horseradish peroxidase (Sigma-
257 Aldrich), and ROS production was determined after addition of 50 μl of 3 μM tetranin or
258 GFP protein solution in 500 μL of 20 mM HEPES buffer (pH 7.0). Luminescence was
259 immediately measured using a 1420 Luminescence Counter ARVO Light (PerkinElmer,
260 Boston, MA), and the signal integration time was 1 s.

261

262 Phytohormone analysis

263 *P. vulgaris* leaves (60-100 mg fresh weight) were harvested and immediately frozen in
264 liquid nitrogen. Using 2 mL screw cap microtubes (Sarstedt, Tokyo, Japan), the samples
265 were homogenized in FastPrep®-24 (MP Biochemicals, Santa Ana, CA) using five 2.3
266 mm zirconia beads and 1 ml of ethyl acetate solvent spiked with deuterated internal
267 standards (IS) (10 ng d3-JA, 5 ng d3-JA-Ile, 10 ng d6-ABA, and 20 ng d4-SA). The
268 hormone analysis was performed according to the method described previously (Tzin *et*
269 *al.*, 2017), with slight modifications.

270

271 Y-tube olfactometer

272 A potted *P. vulgaris* plant whose primary leaves were treated with MD + Tet1, Tet2 or
273 GFP protein solution (see above) was used as the single-odor source. Otherwise,
274 undamaged plants and plants damaged with 100 adult spider mite females for 24 h were
275 used. We then assessed the olfactory responses of *P. persimilis* using a Y-tube
276 olfactometer (3.5 cm inner diameter, 13 cm long for each branch tube and 13 cm long for
277 the main tube). The *P. persimilis* adult females were starved overnight by placing 20

278 mites in a sealed plastic case containing wet cotton with water. The mites were introduced
279 into the Y-shaped wire inside the olfactometer, and the numbers of predators choosing a
280 plant that had been treated with mechanical damage and Tet1, Tet2 or GFP or an
281 undamaged plant serving as a basic control were recorded. Predators that did not choose
282 within 5 min (“no choice” subjects) were excluded from the statistical analysis. The
283 orientations of the odor-source containers relative to the olfactometer arms were changed
284 after every five bioassays. Assays using 20 predators were carried out as a single replicate
285 in a day. Three replicates (60 predators in all) were carried out on different days. The
286 experiments were performed in a climate-controlled room ($24 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$).

287

288 Volatile analysis

289 Similarly to the procedure used in the olfactometer assay, a potted *P. vulgaris* plant whose
290 primary leaves were treated with MD + Tet1, Tet2 or GFP protein solution was used as
291 the single-odor source. Otherwise, undamaged plants and plants damaged by 100 adult
292 spider mite females for 24 h were used. Volatiles from the potted plants were collected in
293 a glass container (2 L) using Tenax 60/80 (Gerstel GmbH & Co. KG, Mülheim an der

294 Ruhr, Germany) in a laboratory room ($24 \pm 1^\circ\text{C}$, under light conditions) for 3 h. Clean air
295 passed through the charcoal filter was drawn into the glass bottle, and VOCs from the
296 headspace of the bottle were collected at a flow rate of 100 mL min^{-1} . *n*-Tridecane (0.1
297 μg), infiltrated into a piece of filter paper (1 cm^2), was added as an internal standard to
298 the glass container at the onset of VOC collection. The collected volatile compounds were
299 identified and quantified by gas chromatography-mass spectrometry according to the
300 method described previously (Rim *et al.*, 2017).

301

302 Statistical analyses

303 We performed one-way ANOVAs with Dunnett's contrasts and Tukey's HSD tests using
304 the multcomp R package in R version 3.4.2 and an online program
305 (http://astatsa.com/OneWay_Anova_with_TukeyHSD/), respectively. A replicated G-
306 test was conducted to evaluate the data from the Y-tube olfactometer analyses.

307

308 **Results**

309 Isolation and transient expression of putative mite salivary gland protein (SGP) genes

310 On the basis of the 18,414 predicted genes in the ORCAE database
311 (<http://bioinformatics.psb.ugent.be/orcae/>), we selected 90 putatively annotated SGP
312 genes by keyword searches. Since SGPs are delivered into the saliva through the classical
313 eukaryotic endoplasmic reticulum (ER)-Golgi pathway (Bos *et al.*, 2010), we targeted the
314 genes that harbor signal peptide sequences at the *N*-terminus using the SignalP 4.0
315 program (Petersen *et al.*, 2011), which resulted in the selection of 23 genes. Furthermore,
316 we removed the 4 genes that contained a transmembrane domain. Of the remaining 19
317 genes, the cDNAs of 13 genes were successfully amplified using mRNA from adult mites
318 (Table S1), and the corresponding RNAs were truncated so that they lacked a signal
319 peptide sequence at the *N*-terminus, and individually expressed transiently in *Phaseolus*
320 *vulgaris* leaves using the agroinfiltration system. Among the
321 cDNAs encoding these 13 SGPs, two members, SGP7 (tetur05g09318) and SGP8
322 (tetur08g07240), caused significantly higher mortality of adult mite females than control
323 cDNA in agroinfiltrated *P. vulgaris* leaves (Fig. 1a). Both SGP7 and SGP8 also increased
324 the mortality of adult females in leaves of another host (*S. melongena*) (Fig. 1b).

325 Moreover, since *Agrobacterium* species, including *A. tumefaciens*, are plant pathogens,
326 they may boost plant defense responses (Escobar & Dandekar, 2003). Therefore, instead
327 of agroinfiltration, we assessed the potential defense response by direct infiltration of
328 SGP7 and SGP8 proteins into *P. vulgaris* leaves. The assays confirmed an enhanced
329 number of dead mites in SGP7- or SGP8-infiltrated leaves after 3 days compared to
330 uninfiltrated leaves and leaves infiltrated with green fluorescent protein (GFP) that served
331 as a control protein (Fig. 1c).

332 Based on all these results, we defined SGP7 and SGP8 as candidates of elicitor-like
333 proteins and named them tetranin1 (Tet1) and tetranin2 (Tet2), respectively.

334

335 Homology and tissue localization

336 To explore whether tetranins share similarities to proteins with predicted and
337 characterized functions, we performed BLASTX searches using the ORCAE database
338 (<http://bioinformatics.psb.ugent.be/orcae/overview/Tetur>) (Fig. S2). We found that
339 among the crustacean homologues exhibiting E-values $<10^{-5}$, none of the characterized
340 proteins have sequence similarities to tetranins. Tet2 shows strong similarity to 4 putative

341 *T. urticae* SGPs (tetur08g08060, tetur03g00030, tetur08g07910 [approximately 90%
342 identities] and tetur08g08090 [77% identity]). Although tetur08g07910 was excluded
343 from our primary research targets in the first *in silico* screening performed in 2014, this
344 protein was subsequently newly annotated as an SGP in the updated version of the
345 ORCAE database (note that 118 SGPs were annotated as SGPs in Feb. 2018). In contrast,
346 Tet1 shows weaker similarity to putative *T. urticae* SGPs, with best scores of only 36%
347 and 37% identity with putative *T. urticae* SGPs tetur24g01580 and tetur13g02580
348 [SGP10], respectively. It also appeared that neither tetranin has similarity to reported
349 Tetranychus effectors (less than 40% identity with Tu84, Te84, Tu28 or Te28) (Villarroel
350 *et al.*, 2016).

351 To confirm the tissue-specific expression of tetranins in adult mites, we performed *in situ*
352 hybridization using antisense RNA probes (Fig. 2a). We observed staining of the anterior
353 prosomal glands in at least one of the three paired spider mite salivary glands (Mothes &
354 Seitz, 1981), indicating that Tet1 is a putative salivary gland protein. However, we cannot
355 exclude the possibility that Tet1 signals were also partly observed in the silk glands. For
356 Tet2, in contrast, other tissues were concomitantly stained (Fig. S3), although this may

357 have been caused by non-specific cross-hybridization of the Tet2 probe with transcripts
358 of multiple Tet2 family genes (discussed below).

359 We next explored whether tetranins are really delivered to host plants. Western blot
360 analysis using anti-Tet1 antibody showed the presence of two signals of Tet1 proteins
361 synthesized using the *E. coli* system; note that the smaller-sized signal (about 27 kDa)
362 matches the size estimated from its amino acid sequence (Fig. 2b). However, Tet1 was
363 detected only as the larger-sized protein in the mite body, and no Tet1 signals were
364 detected in either damaged or undamaged host plants. On the other hand, the analysis
365 using anti-Tet2 antibody showed the presence of two signals for Tet2 protein synthesized
366 using the *E. coli* system and a single signal for Tet2 protein in the mite body. In addition
367 to a signal with identical size to the upper signal, a larger-sized Tet2 protein signal was
368 detected in mite-damaged host plants but not undamaged host plants (Fig. 2b).

369

370 Leaf defense traits induced by application of tetranin at damaged sites

371 When spider mites suck plant tissues, various molecules, such as elicitors, are thought to
372 be secreted into the physically damaged zones of the plant tissues. Therefore, we next

373 applied various doses of tetranin solutions to mechanically damaged (MD) leaf tissues.
374 To understand in detail how tetranins boost the defense response in bean leaves, here we
375 focused on the transcriptional regulation of two selected marker defense genes
376 (*pathogenesis-related* [PR] genes) that have been shown to be responsive to spider mite
377 attack in bean plants (Arimura *et al.*, 2000). The transcript levels of *PR1* were
378 significantly elevated in leaves treated with MD + Tet1 or Tet2 at 3 μ M each, compared
379 to those treated with a MD + GFP control (Fig. 3a). Likewise, the transcript levels of *PR3*
380 were increased in leaves treated with MD + Tet1 at 3 μ M and those treated with MD +
381 Tet2 at concentrations greater than 0.5 μ M.
382 Next we analyzed the levels of accumulation of jasmonate (JA), its derivative (jasmonoyl
383 isoleucine (JA-Ile)), and salicylate (SA), phytohormones with essential roles in plant
384 defense against spider mites (Ozawa *et al.*, 2000; Ament *et al.*, 2004; Alba *et al.*, 2015;
385 Okada *et al.*, 2015). The endogenous levels of these phytohormones were elevated in
386 leaves treated with MD + Tet1 or Tet2 compared to those treated with a MD + GFP
387 control (3 μ M each, Fig. 3b). However, the endogenous levels of abscisic acid (ABA),
388 which can cross-talk with JA signaling (Anderson *et al.*, 2004; Adie *et al.*, 2007; Seo &

389 Park, 2010), were only increased when the leaves were treated with MD + Tet2. Both
390 defense gene transcripts and phytohormone levels were increased in leaves infested with
391 spider mites for 24 h (Figs. 3a and 3b).

392

393 Early cellular responses

394 As described above, not only Vm changes and Ca²⁺ channel opening but also reactive
395 oxygen species (ROS) production is known to be a typical early cellular response to
396 herbivory (Maffei *et al.*, 2007). We therefore assessed these responses in *P. vulgaris*
397 leaves treated with tetranins. Overall, Tet2 triggered the depolarization of Vm, cytosolic
398 Ca²⁺ influx, and the generation of ROS, compared to treatment with a GFP or buffer
399 control (Fig. 4). However, Tet1 triggered Vm depolarization and cytosolic Ca²⁺ influx
400 but not the generation of ROS.

401

402 Induced indirect defenses

403 Indirect defenses against herbivorous mites are plant defense strategies that act by
404 inducing *de novo* biosynthesis of volatiles and emitting the blend of volatiles to attract

405 carnivorous predatory mites (Sabelis *et al.*, 2007). If tetranins serve as elicitors for
406 indirect defenses, the blend of volatiles released from potted *P. vulgaris* plants whose
407 leaves had been exposed to tetranins would affect the olfactory responses of the predatory
408 mite *Phytoseiulus persimilis*. As expected, the predatory mites showed a preference for
409 spider mite-infested plants compared with untreated plants (Fig. 5a), as previously
410 reported (Tahmasebi *et al.*, 2014). Likewise, when primary leaves were treated with MD
411 + Tet1 or Tet2, the predatory mites were attracted to the treated plants over untreated
412 plants. In contrast, the predatory mites were not attracted to plants treated with MD +
413 GFP serving as a control.

414 We therefore hypothesized that the release of an array of volatiles was induced in the
415 plants exposed to MD + Tet1 or Tet2, whereas none of the eight major volatiles were
416 significantly released compared to those released by the control plants after 24 h ($P >$
417 0.05, Fig. 5b). It should be noted, however, that levels of limonene released by plants
418 treated with MD + Tet1 and MD + Tet2 were elevated 3.2 and 5.7 times, respectively,
419 compared with those released by MD + GFP-treated plants. Likewise, the levels of (*E*)-
420 β -caryophyllene released from plants were elevated 3.8 and 5.2 times in response to MD

421 + Tet1 and MD + Tet2 treatment, respectively.

422

423

424 **Discussion**

425 Spider mites use their stylet-like mouthparts to suck chlorophyll and liquid contents from
426 leaf cells. Because collection of the regurgitant from the small spider mite mouthparts is
427 technically difficult, the characterization of elicitors from sucking herbivores has been
428 difficult to achieve. Instead, genome-wide approaches have been a powerful and
429 convenient tool to screen genes of interest (e.g., salivary gland genes), and *in silico*
430 analyses using databases succeeded in characterizing effector proteins/peptides from
431 green peach aphids *T. urticae* and *T. evansi* (Bos *et al.*, 2010; Villarroel *et al.*, 2016).
432 Using a similar strategy, here we characterized two novel elicitor proteins from the two-
433 spotted spider mite (*Tetranychus urticae*), tetranins, that were responsible for eliciting
434 defense responses in host plants. Tet1 and Tet2 were deduced to be distinct SGP members,
435 since they shared only 19% amino acid identity (Fig. S2). They have no particular
436 conserved domains except those of signal peptides, indicating that tetranins are novel

437 members of putative SGPs.

438 Although previous proteome studies on spider mites identified about 90 and 177 putative
439 salivary gland proteins from *T. urticae* and *T. truncates* (Jonckheere *et al.*, 2016; Zhu *et*
440 *al.*, 2018), neither Tet1 nor Tet2 was listed among them. However, we observed that Tet1
441 is expressed predominantly in the anterior podoccephalic salivary glands, possibly together
442 with the silk glands, of *T. urticae*, implying that Tet1 is secreted to outside of the body.

443 Moreover, Tet2 appeared to be expressed in multiple tissues, including the salivary glands
444 (Fig. 2a), suggesting that Tet2 has a more general function in mite metabolism besides
445 being a salivary elicitor. Otherwise, it is possible that the antisense probes might cross-
446 hybridize to other types of mRNA, as the Tet2 gene shares very high nucleotide similarity
447 with 3 putative SPGs (see above).

448 Tet2 may be structurally modified inside the mite body and/or host tissues (Fig. 2b).

449 Given the fact that the molecular sizes of the bands detected were shifted to 5~8 kDa
450 larger than predicted, the proteins might be modulated with large molecules such as
451 mono-ubiquitin or glycosides. Although it could be speculated that we observed non-
452 specific detection of *T. urticae*-elicited plant proteins, an identical-sized signal was

453 scarcely observed when *P. vulgaris* leaves were treated with MeJA and/or MeSA (Fig.
454 S5), supporting the possibility that this protein is secreted from mites. On the other hand,
455 Tet1 would be not abundantly or less secreted into the host tissues at low concentrations
456 below the detection levels of the nano-LC MS/MS system and western blot analysis. This
457 would be in accord with the fact that Tet1 was sufficiently abundant to be detected by
458 immunoblot analysis using only an estimated 5 adult mites, but Tet2 was detected using
459 an estimated 75 adult mites, even though antibodies against both peptides are similarly
460 able to detect the tetranin proteins synthesized using the *E. coli* system. Nonetheless,
461 irrespective of whether tetranins are secreted or not from mites, the use of tetranins
462 generated using the *E. coli* system would be an ideal platform for spider mite pest
463 management, beyond the significance in the natural ecosystem.

464 Tetranins allow *P. vulgaris* host leaves to elicit defense responses via early cellular
465 processes including Vm depolarization and cytosolic Ca²⁺ influx, which are known to
466 initiate cellular defense responses (Maffei *et al.*, 2007; Zebelo & Maffei, 2015) (Figs. 4a
467 and 4b). These early responses may precede the activation of JA and SA signaling that
468 enables the concomitant activation of plant defense responses of spider mite-infested

469 plants, as generally seen in several plant species, including legumes and Solanaceae
470 (Ozawa *et al.*, 2000; Kant *et al.*, 2004; Alba *et al.*, 2015). It was shown recently that a
471 mucin-like protein (NIMLP) elicitor identified from the sucking herbivore *Nilaparvata*
472 *lugens* activates Ca²⁺ signaling, MEK2 MAP kinase and the JA signaling pathway in
473 *Nicotiana benthamiana* leaves (Shangguan *et al.*, 2018). NIMLPs do not share similarities
474 with tetranins or other *T. urticae* proteins.

475 The leaf levels of ROS and ABA were shown to be elevated only when *P. vulgaris* leaves
476 were treated with MD + Tet2 (Figs. 3b and 4c), and little is known about their roles in
477 defense against herbivorous arthropods, including spider mites. It has been shown in
478 *Arabidopsis* that an FAC-induced ROS burst is antagonistic to JA biosynthesis (Block *et*
479 *al.*, 2017). However, the features of that system may not correspond to those of the system
480 involving tetranins, because we did not observe any differences in the endogenous JA
481 levels between Tet1- and Tet2-exposed *P. vulgaris* leaves (Fig. 3b), even though Tet2
482 triggered ROS generation but Tet1 did not. Moreover, while ABA signaling has been
483 reported to modulate plant disease resistance by inducing SA-linked *PR* transcript
484 inductions (Seo & Park, 2010) and by suppressing JA-ethylene signaling pathways

485 (Anderson *et al.*, 2004) in *Arabidopsis*, again, this system may not correspond to the
486 system involving tetranins in *Phaseolus* sp. It is known that ROS mediate ABA signaling
487 for plant cellular signaling and homeostasis (Cho *et al.*, 2009). However, as our
488 preliminary tests have shown that pre-treating leaves with an ABA biosynthesis inhibitor
489 failed to suppress the Tet2-induced increase of *PR* transcripts in *P. vulgaris* leaves (Fig.
490 S4), it still remains unknown whether Tet2 induces the increase of *PR* transcripts via ROS
491 generation and subsequent ABA signaling.

492 Leaf damage by spider mite attacks caused only slightly increased levels of JA, JA-Ile,
493 and ABA, as shown in Fig. 3b. According to (Bensoussan *et al.*, 2016), spider mite
494 feeding occurred continuously from several minutes to more than half an hour, during
495 which time a mite consumed a single mesophyll cell. During the consumption, mites
496 might secrete unidentified effectors that enable the suppression of JA, JA-Ile, and ABA
497 biosynthesis. Also, regarding at least JAs, since SA signaling is well known to be
498 antagonistic to JA biosynthesis and signaling (Okada *et al.*, 2015), the elevated leaf SA
499 levels might suppress the biosynthesis of JAs upon spider mite feeding. Moreover,
500 applying tetranins did not result in release of volatiles whose quantitative composition

501 fully mimicked that of volatiles released from *P. vulgaris* plants in response to spider
502 mite attacks. The increased release of (*Z*)-3-hexenyl acetate, methyl salicylate, and the
503 two homoterpenes [(*E*)-4,8-dimethyl-1,3,7-nonatriene and (*E,E*)-4,8,12-trimethyltrideca-
504 1,3,7,11-tetraene] apparently did not occur in response to tetranin exposure, as compared
505 with the response to a spider mite attack (Fig. 5b). For the induction of those volatiles,
506 additional factors, including uncharacterized elicitors, might be involved. For example,
507 several types of elicitors (FAC-type elicitors, porin-like protein, and β -galactofuranose
508 polysaccharide) serve as oral elicitors of the model herbivore *S. littoralis* (Spiteller &
509 Boland, 2003; Bricchi *et al.*, 2012; Guo *et al.*, 2013), indicating that host plants
510 concomitantly perceive multiple elicitor molecules from a single herbivore pest, and
511 consequently produce defense responses including volatile emissions. Modulation of
512 plant defense responses to *Mythimna loreyi* and *Parnara guttata* by simultaneous
513 recognition of different types of elicitors in rice has also been proposed (Shinya *et al.*,
514 2016).

515 Overall, we still need to clarify the puzzling nature of tetranins. However, findings from
516 the present pilot study already provide new hints for unraveling the molecular
517 mechanisms involved in the early plant defense responses against spider mite attack.

518

519

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529

530

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664 **Supporting Information**

665 **Table S1** Putative *Tetranychus urticae* salivary gland proteins focused on in this study.

666 **Table S2** Primers used for qPCR analysis.

667 **Fig. S1** Titer of *Agrobacterium* cells in *Phaseolus vulgaris* host leaves.

668 **Fig. S2** Phylogenetic trees of deduced amino acids of tetranins, other arthropod genes of
669 unknown function, and mite effector genes.

670 **Fig. S3** *In situ* hybridization using the sense probe of tetranin genes in spider mite bodies.

671 **Fig. S4** Effect of an ABA biosynthesis inhibitor on transcript levels induced in leaves by
672 mechanical damage plus tetranins.

673 **Fig. S5** Immunoblot analysis for Tet2 in *Phaseolus vulgaris* leaves treated with methyl
674 jasmonate and/or methyl salicylate or aqueous solution for 24 h.

675 Figure Legends

676 **Fig. 1** Screening of spider mite elicitor-like secretory proteins. Adult spider mites were
677 incubated on discs prepared from *Phaseolus vulgaris* (a) and *Solanum melongena* (b)
678 leaves in which the indicated truncated salivary gland protein (SGP) or vector control
679 (VC) was transiently expressed using the agroinfiltration system. The leaf discs infiltrated
680 with MES buffer alone served as a control (Ct). The mortality rate of mites on the disc
681 was determined after 2 days. The means of the mortality numbers relative to those of
682 mites on the control discs with standard errors are shown ($n = 25$ for *P. vulgaris* and $n =$
683 30 for *S. melongena*). (c) Similarly, adult spider mite females were incubated for 2 days
684 or 3 days on discs prepared from *P. vulgaris* leaves that had been infiltrated with GFP,
685 SGP7 or SGP8 protein for 1 day. The uninfiltrated leaf discs served as a control (Ct). The
686 means of the mortality numbers relative to those on the control discs with standard errors
687 are shown. Data represent the means and standard errors ($n = 9-10$). Data marked with
688 asterisks are significantly different from those of the Ct based on an ANOVA with
689 Dunnett's contrasts (***, $P < 0.001$; **, $0.001 \leq P < 0.01$).

690

691

692 **Fig. 2 Localization and secretion of Tetranins.** (a) *In situ* hybridization using the
693 antisense probe of tetranin (Tet1 or Tet2) in the bodies of adult female spider mites. The
694 merged bright field and fluorescence images are shown. The fluorescence signals
695 observed in the anterior salivary glands are indicated by arrows. Note that the sense RNA
696 probes serving as controls showed staining of the mites' whole bodies (Fig. S3). (b)
697 Immunoblot analysis for Tet1 (top panel) and Tet2 (bottom panel) in the bodies of adult
698 female spider mites, on undamaged and damaged *Phaseolus vulgaris* leaf discs. The
699 putative tetranin signals are indicated by arrows.

700

701 **Fig. 3** Transcript and phytohormone levels in leaves exposed to mechanical damage (MD)
702 and tetranins. (a) Transcript levels of defense genes (*PR1* and *PR3*) in *Phaseolus vulgaris*
703 leaves 24 h after application of MD + GFP (3 μ M) or tetranin (Tet1 or Tet2) protein at
704 0.1, 0.5, 1.0 or 3.0 μ M and 24 h after exposure to 100 spider mites. Untreated leaves at
705 the same time points served as a control (Ct). Note that we set 24 h as the time point for
706 analysis according to the results of our preliminary time-course analysis of *PR1* and *PR3*

707 transcript levels in leaves infiltrated with Tet2 (Fig. S4). Data represent the means and
708 standard errors ($n = 5-6$). Data marked with an asterisk are significantly different from
709 those of MD + GFP based on an ANOVA with Dunnett's contrasts (***, $P < 0.001$; **,
710 $0.001 \leq P < 0.01$; *, $0.01 \leq P < 0.05$). Otherwise, the means followed by a P -value are
711 marginally different. (b) Endogenous levels of jasmonic acid (JA), jasmonoyl isoleucine
712 (JA-Ile), salicylic acid (SA) and abscisic acid (ABA) in leaves 1 and 3 h after treatment
713 with MD + GFP, or MD + tetranin proteins (3 μM each), and 24 h after exposure to 100
714 spider mites. Data represent the means and standard errors ($n = 6$). The means indicated
715 by different small letters are significantly different based on an ANOVA with post hoc
716 Tukey's HSD ($P < 0.05$); ns, not significant.

717

718 **Fig. 4** Early cellular responses to tetranins (Tet1 and Tet2). (a) Time course (left) and
719 quantitative values (right) of V_m in leaves treated with 3 ml of 1 μM Tet1, Tet2 or GFP
720 protein dissolved in 5 mM MES-NaOH (pH 6.0). Data represent the mean and standard
721 error ($n = 4$). (b) False-color image reconstructions of fluorochemical intracellular Ca^{2+}
722 in leaves cut mechanically and treated by application of tetranins dissolved in HEPES

723 buffer (3 μM), with the buffer alone serving as a control. The green fluorescence refers
724 to the binding of Calcium Orange with Ca^{2+} , whereas the chloroplasts are evidenced by a
725 bright red color caused by chlorophyll fluorescence. (c) The tetranin-induced generation
726 of reactive oxygen species (ROS) was monitored in bean leaf discs after the application
727 of tetranin or GFP protein solution (3 μM). The upper and lower panels, respectively,
728 show the time-dependent transition and maximum accumulation of ROS in leaf discs after
729 challenge with each protein. Data represent the means and standard errors ($n = 6$). The
730 means indicated by different small letters are significantly different based on an ANOVA
731 with post hoc Tukey's HSD ($P < 0.05$).

732

733 **Fig. 5** Indirect plant defenses in leaves in response to tetranins. (a) The olfactory response
734 of *Phytoseiulus persimilis* when offered volatiles released by plants treated with MD +
735 tetranin or GFP protein solution (3 μM) for 24 h or plants infested with 100 mites for 24
736 h vs. untreated control plants (Ct). The figures in parentheses represent the numbers of
737 predators that did not choose either odor source ("no choice" subjects). A replicated G-
738 test was conducted to evaluate the significance of the attraction in each experiment (***,

739 $P < 0.001$; **, $0.001 \leq P < 0.01$; *, $0.01 \leq P < 0.05$; ns, $P > 0.05$). (b) Headspace volatiles
740 released from plants treated with MD + GFP, Tet1 (T1) or Tet2 (T2) were collected after
741 24-27 h. Data represent the means and standard errors ($n = 4-5$). The means were not
742 significantly different (ns, $P > 0.05$), on the basis of an ANOVA. (*E*)-DMNT, (*E*)-4,8-
743 dimethyl-1,3,7-nonatriene; MeSA, methyl salicylate; (*E,E*)-TMTT, (*E,E*)-4,8,12-
744 trimethyltrideca-1,3,7,11-tetraene.

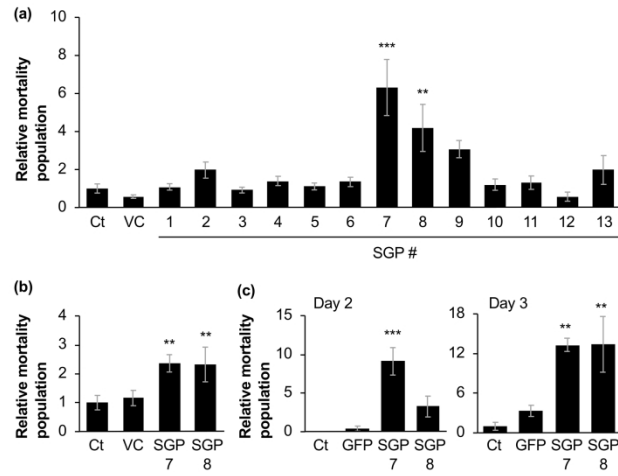


Fig. 1

Figure 1

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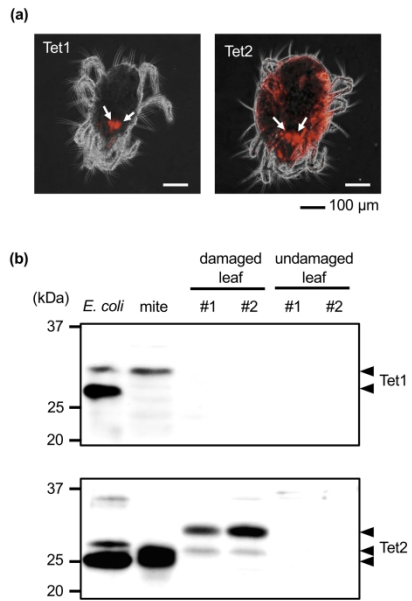


Fig. 2

Figure 2

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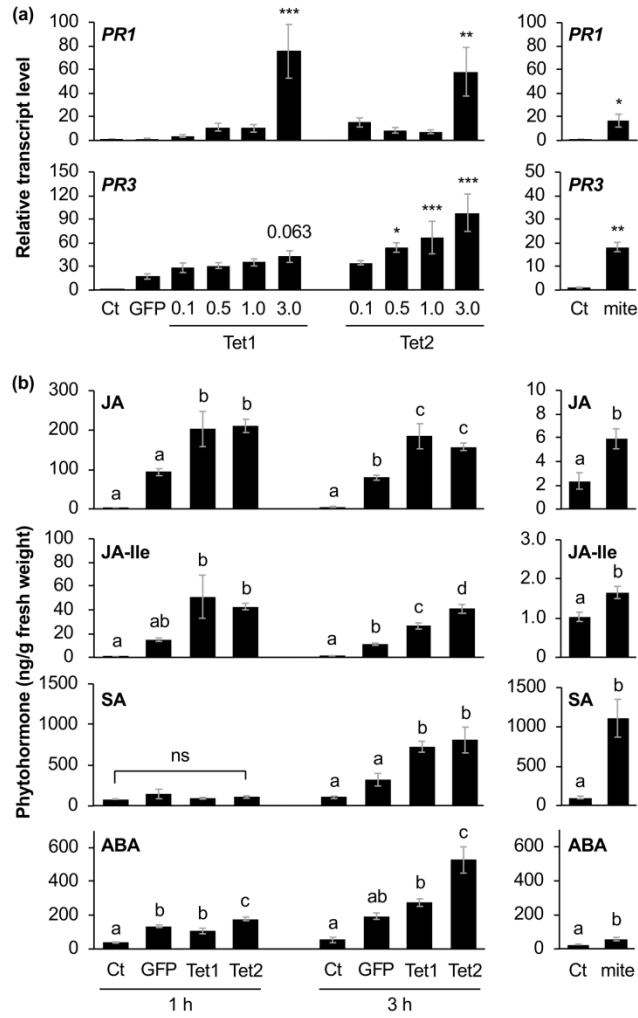


Fig. 3

Figure 3

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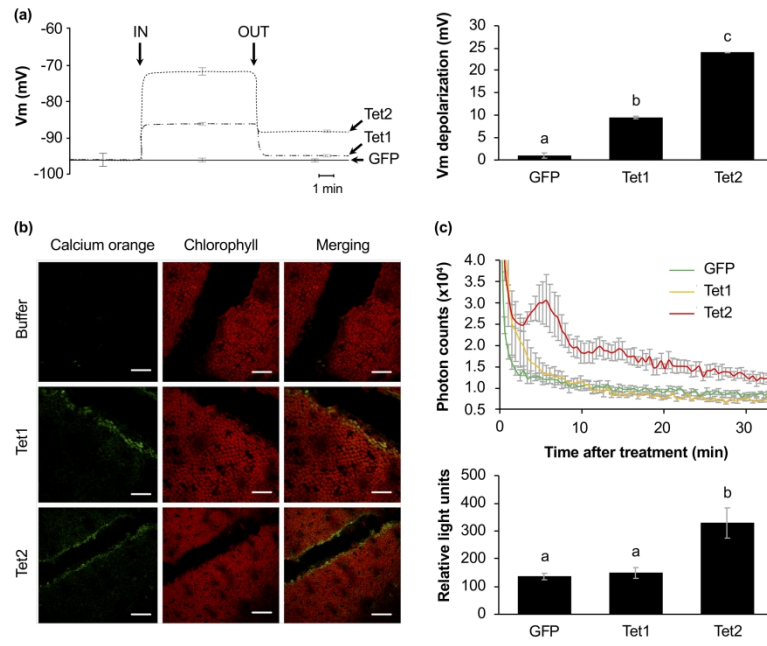


Fig. 4

Figure 4

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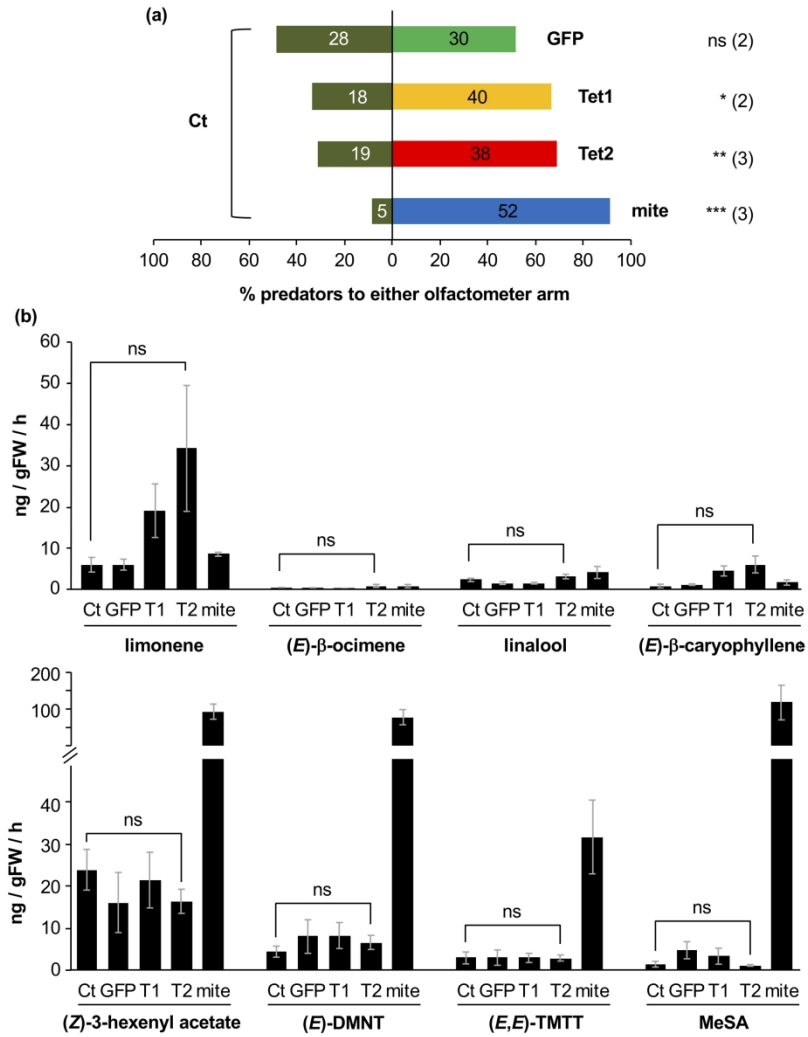


Fig. 5

Figure 5

209x297mm (300 x 300 DPI)